

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAN SA 05934 272014Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6452

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 5934

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, ES
SUBJECT: DIALOGUE BETWEEN PRESIDENT ROMERO AND ARCHBISHOP
ROMERO

REFS: STATE 297868, SAN SALVADOR 5876

1. ARCHBISHOP ROMERO RECEIVED ME ON DECEMBER 23 AS
SAN SALVADOR WAS CLOSING DOWN FOR THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY.
I DESCRIBED TO HIM THE EFFORTS UNDERWAY TO ARRANGE A
CHURCH-STATE DIALOGUE FOR THE PURPOSE OF DIMINISHING
POLITICAL TENSIONS. MENTIONING THE CONVERSATIONS IN
WASHINGTON, I REFERRED ALSO TO THE INVOLVEMENT OF BISHOP
D'ANTONIO IN NEW ORLEANS AND SAID THAT I HAD BEEN ASKED
TO DO WHAT I COULD AS A FRIEND OF BOTH PARTIES.

2. ARCHBISHOP ROMERO WROTE DOWN THE NAMES OF THE
FOUR SUGGESTED INTERMEDIARIES. HE SAID HE KNEW THE
FIRST TWO QUITE WELL (DR. PRUDENCIO LLACH AND DON
CARLOS CANESSA) AND THE OTHER TWO ONLY BY NAME. HE
SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO THINK OVER THIS PROPOSAL AND LET
ME HAVE HIS CONSIDERED REACTION AT A LATER DATE.

3. THE CHURCH, SAID THE ARCHBISHOP, WANTS A
DIALOGUE "BUT A REAL ONE, NOT JUST A WASHING OF
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THE HANDS." HE HAD HAD ONE TALK WITH PRESIDENT
ROMERO BUT IT HAD BEEN MORE AN EXCHANGE OF IMPRESSIONS
THAN A TRUE DIALOGUE. SINCE THEN THEY AHD NOT SEEN
EACH OTHER, AND A LETTER WHICH THE ARCHBISHOP WROTE
TO THE PRESIDENT SEEMED TO HAVE GOTTEN LOST.

4. THE ARCHBISHOP SAID THAT HE SAW THREE ELEMENTS

ESSENTIAL TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF ANY DIALOGUE:

- A. RESTORATION OF AN ATMOSPHERE OF CONFIDENCE FOR THE CHURCH AND A CESSATION OF ABUSES ("ATROPELLOS");
 - B. EXPLANATION OF THE STATUS OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS; AND
 - C. REVIEW OF THE INDIVIDUAL CASES OF PRIESTS WHO HAVE BEEN EXPELLED FROM THE COUNTRY.
- WE AGREED THAT I WOULD AWAIT THE ARCHBISHOP'S CALL.

5. ARCHBISHOP ROMERO THEN VOLUNTEERED THAT HE HAD LIKED MY RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS (SAN SALVADOR 5773) AND CONSIDERED THAT IT CONFORMED VERY WELL TO THE TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH. IT IS NOT ENOUGH, HE SAID, TO CONCENTRATE ONLY ON THE VIOLENT ACTS OF OUR SOCIETY. ONE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT VIOLENCE USUALLY COMES ABOUT AS THE RESULT OF REPRESSION. I REPLIED THAT ALL MEN OF GOOD WILL SHOULD BE WORKING TO ELIMINATE BOTH REPRESSION AND VIOLENCE.

6. AS OUR CONVERSATION CLOSED, I PRESENTED THE ARCHBISHOP WITH A SMALL CHRISTMAS GIFT, HE SAW ME OUT TO THE FRONT STEPS, AND HE REITERATED THAT HE WOULD BE CALLING ME.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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